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TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

The EARL of LEICESTER.

By Mr. P O T T E R.

Si canimus Sylvas, Sylvæ sint Consule dignæ.



L O N D O N:

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H. O. L. K. H. A. M.

A. P. O. E. M.

TO THE

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THE EARL OF ARBUTHNOT



By Mr. P. O. E. M.

2nd Edition, 1840



LONDON

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H O L K H A M.

TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE EARL OF *LEICESTER*.



THE lofty Beeches, and their sacred Shade
O'er Pens-hurst's Flow'r-embroider'd Vale
display'd,

Have yet their Glory : not that Sidney's Hand
" Marshal'd in even Ranks th' obsequious Band ;"
Or his fresh Garlands in these Bow'rs entwin'd,
Whilst all Arcadia open'd on his Mind :
But here sweet Waller breath'd his am'rous Flame,
And taught the Groves his Sachariffa's Name ;

Here met the Muse, " while gentle Love was by,
 " That tun'd his Lute, and wound the Strings so high :"
 Still with th' enraptur'd Strains the Valleys ring,
 And the Groves flourish in eternal Spring.

Eternal Spring smiles in those green Retreats,
 " No more the Monarch's, still the Muse's Seats,"
 Where crown'd with Tow'rs majestic Windsor stands,
 And the wide World beneath her Feet commands :
 Not that her regal Rampires boast the Fame
 Of each great EDWARD's, each great HENRY's Name ;
 Not that, in Days of high-achiev'd Renown,
 There BRITAIN'S GENIUS fix'd his awful Throne,
 Encircled with the glorious Blaze that springs
 From conquer'd Nations, and from captive Kings :
 When each proud Trophy moulders from the Wall,
 And e'en th' imperial Dome itself shall fall :
 When those great Names, the Warrior and the Sage,
 Lie clouded in the dark historic Page ;
 Then shall the heav'n-born Muse (to whom belong
 The more than mortal-making Pow'rs of Song)
 Thro' Time's deep Shades her sacred Light display,

And pour the Beam of Fame's eternal Day.

Queen of sweet Numbers and melodious Strains,
 If yet Thou deign to visit Britain's Plains;
 If yet thy hallow'd Haunts partake thy Love,
 Clear Spring, enamel'd Vale, or bow'ry Grove;
 O come, and range with me th' inspiring Glades,
 Where LEICESTER spreads the Lawns and forms the Shades,
 On HOLKHAM's Plains bids Græcian Structures rise,
 And the tall Column shoot into the Skies;
 Beneath whose proud Survey, extended wide,
 New Scenes, new Beauties charm on ev'ry Side:
 Here, crown'd with Woods, the shaded Hills ascend,
 In open Light there the low Vales extend;
 Here in rich Harvests waves the ripen'd Grain,
 And there fresh Verdure cloaths the pastur'd Plain,
 Sweetly' intermix'd, and lovely to behold,
 As the green Emerald enchas'd in Gold.

See where the limpid Lake thro' pendent Shades,
 The Hills between, her liquid 'Treasures leads;
 And to the Boughs, that fringe her crisped Sides,
 Holds the clear Mirror of her crystal Tides:

Her crystal Tides reflect the waving Scene,
 Their silvery Surface dark'ning into Green;
 As on the steep Banks, bending o'er the Flood,
 Grotesque and wild up springs th' o'ershadowing Wood;
 Or the slope Margent, with a softer Rise,
 Shade above Shade, and Rank o'er Rank supplies;
 The verdant Basis of yon' champain Mound,
 Its hallow'd Head, with God's own Temple crown'd:
 The home-bound Mariner from far descries,
 Emerging from the Waves the tall Tow'r rise;
 With Transport bids the solemn Structure Hail,
 And wing'd for Britain speeds the flying Sail.

In nearer View, 'midst the Lawn's wide Extent,
 That gently swells with an unforc'd Ascent,
 In just Proportion rising on the Sight
 The stately Mansion lifts it's tow'ry Height,
 And glitters o'er the Groves. An Oak beneath,
 That calls the cool Gales thro' its Boughs to breath,
 Where the Sun darts his fervid Rays in vain,
 Like the great Patriarch on Mamre's Plain
 The princely LEICESTER sits: the pageant Pride
 Of cumbrous Greatness banish'd from his Side,

In these blest Bow'rs He plans the great Design ;
 With heighten'd Charms bids modest Nature shine ;
 Shows us Magnificence allied to Use,
 Tho' rich, yet chaste ; tho' splendid, not profuse ;
 Calls forth each Beauty that from Order springs ;
 From its lov'd Greece each honour'd Science brings ;
 O'er Art's fair Train extends his gen'rous Care ;
 And bids each polish'd Grace inhabit here.

Nor these alone : here VIRTUE loves to dwell,
 No cold Recluse self-cavern'd in a Cell ;
 Active and warm She breaths a nobler Part,
 Glows in the Breast, and opens all the Heart ;
 To gen'rous Deeds She fires th' empassion'd Mind,
 The Substitute of Heav'n to bless Mankind ;
 She thro' desponding Misery's chearless Gloom
 Pours Joy, and gives neglected Worth to bloom ;
 She in each Bosom stills the rising Sigh,
 And wipes off ev'ry Tear from ev'ry Eye ;
 She to yon' Alms-house, bosom'd in the Grove,
 From Toil and Care bids Age and Want remove ;
 There the tir'd Eve of labour'd Life to rest,
 Fed by her Hand, and by her Bounty blest.

These, these are Rays that round true Greatness shine,
 And thine, bright CLIFFORD ! the full Blaze is thine.
 Bring the green Bay, the fragrant Myrtle bring,
 The Violet glowing in the Lap of Spring ;
 Bid the sweet Vallies send each honied Flow'r,
 Each Herb, each Leaf of aromatic Pow'r ;
 The Muse's Hand shall their mix'd Odors spread,
 And strew the Ground where CLIFFORD deigns to tread.

In distant Prospect, sinking from the Eye,
 Low in the tufted Dales the Hamlets lie ;
 Where Virgin Innocence, and meek-ey'd Peace,
 With calm Content, the straw-roof'd Cottage blefs ;
 And strong-nerv'd Industry in purest Flow
 Spreads o'er the vermeil Cheek Health's roseate Glow.

More distant yet the throng'd commercial Town,
 That makes the Wealth of other Worlds her own,
 Lifts her proud Head, and fees with ev'ry Tide
 Rich-freighted Navies croud her harbour'd Side :
 Or bids the parting Vessel spread the Sail
 Loose to the Wind, and catch the rising Gale :

Whilst the vast Ocean, Albion's utmost Bound,
Rolls its broad Wave, a World of Waters, round.

In sweet Astonishment th' impatient Mind
Bids her free Pow'rs expatiate unconfin'd ;
From Scene to Scene in rapid Progress flies,
Glances from Earth to Seas, from Seas to Skies ;
Delights to feel the great Ideas roll,
Swell on the Sense, and fill up all the Soul.

Not such the Scene, when o'er th' uncultur'd Wild
No Harvest rose, no chearful Verdure smil'd ;
On the bare Hill no Tree was seen to spread
The graceful Foliage of its waving Head ;
No breathing Hedge-row form'd the broider'd Bound,
Nor Hawthorn blossom'd on th' unsightly Ground ;
Joy was not here ; no Bird of finer Note
Pour'd the thick Warblings of his dulcet Throat ;
E'en Hope was fled ; and o'er the chearless Plain,
A Waste of Sand, Want held her unblest'd Reign.

Lo, LEICESTER comes ! before his mast'ring Hand
Flies the rude Genius of the savage Land ;

The ruffet Lawns a sudden Verdure wear;
 Starts from the wond'ring Fields the golden Ear;
 Up rise the waving Woods, and haste to crown
 The Hill's bare Brow, and shade the sultry Down:
 The shelter'd Traveller sees, with glad Surprise,
 O'er trackless Wilds th' extended Rows arise;
 And, as their hospitable Branches spread,
 Blesses the friendly Hand that form'd the Shade:
 Joy blooms around, and cheers the Peasant's Toil,
 As smiling Plenty decks the cultur'd Soil;
 The bright'ning Scenes a kinder Genius own,
 And Nature finishes what Art begun.

But can the Verse, tho' Philomela deign
 To breath her sweet Notes thro' the warbled Strain;
 Tho' ev'ry Muse and ev'ry Grace shou'd smile,
 And Raptures raise the honey-steeped Style;
 Can the Verse paint like Nature? Can the Pow'r,
 That wakes to Life free Fancy's imag'd Store,
 Boast Charms like Her's? Or the creative Hand
 In blended Tints such beauteous Scenes command,
 Tho' learned Poussin gives each Grace to flow,
 And bright Lorrain's ethereal Colours glow?

Yet peerless is the Pow'r of sacred Song,
 That bursts in Transport from the Muse's Tongue:
 And, hark ! methinks her hallow'd Voice I hear
 In Notes mellifluous stealing on the Ear ;
 Now clearer, and yet clearer trills the Strain,
 Swells thro' the Grove, and melts along the Plain.

“ Ye Nymphs, that love to range the lilied Vale,
 “ Where streams the silver Fount of Acidale ;
 “ Ye, that in Pindus' laurel'd Groves abide,
 “ Or haunt Cyllene's Cypress-shaded Side ;
 “ Or braid your fine Wreaths in the pearly Caves,
 “ Where fam'd Ilissus rolls his Attic Waves ;
 “ Whilst the Barbarian's rude unletter'd Race
 “ Profane your Grottos, and your Bow'rs deface,
 “ See, LEICESTER courts you to th' Icenian Shore,
 “ Studious your long-lost Honours to restore !
 “ See, the fair Rival of your native Seats,
 “ Aonian HOLKHAM opens all its Sweets !
 “ Deign then, ye sacred Sisters ! deign to tread
 “ The rich Embroidery of yon' velvet Mead,
 “ As fresh, as lovely as your lilied Vale,
 “ Where streams the silver Fount of Acidale :

" If old Cyllene's Cypress-shaded Bow'r,
 " Or Pindus' laurel'd Mount delight you more;
 " Go, sweet Enthusiasts! softly-silent rove,
 " The studious Mazes of the twilight Grove;
 " Or, at the Foot of some hoar Elm reclin'd,
 " Wake the high Thought that swells the raptur'd Mind;
 " Or pensive listen to the solemn Roar
 " Of whitening Billows breaking on the Shore:
 " If the majestic Domes, whose tow'ry Pride
 " Glitter o'er fam'd Ilissus' Attic Tide,
 " Your Steps detain; yon' princely Structure view
 " Grac'd with each finer Art your Athens knew!
 " Each finer Art to just Perfection brought,
 " All that Vitruvius and Palladio thought;
 " The trophied Arch; the Porphyry-pillar'd Hall;
 " The sculptur'd Forms that breath along the Wall;
 " Lycæan Pan; the Faun's Arcadian Race;
 " The Huntress-Queen's inimitable Grace;
 " Athenian Pallas clad in radiant Arms;
 " Heav'n's Empress conscious of her slighted Charms;
 " Your own Apollo, on whose polish'd Brow,
 " Youth blooms, and Grace, and Candor's bright'ning Glow;

" Gods, Heroes, Sages, an illustrious Train,
 " Court you to HOLKHAM's consecrated Plain.
 " Haste then, ye sacred Sisters! haste, and bring
 " The Laurel steep'd in the Castalian Spring;
 " On the choice Bough a purer Fragrance breath,
 " And twine for LEICESTER's Brow th' unfading Wreath."

She ceas'd the raptur'd Strain; and dear to Fame
 Flows the proud Verse inscrib'd with LEICESTER's Name.



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